

## THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL

Anywhere she sits  
in the railway station  
becomes  
a throne.

## THE ARTISTS

we sleep on the floor  
where the cockroaches say hello.  
when we get hungry we reverse our paint brushes  
and use them as chopsticks,  
we use rain puddles as mirrors for our shaving  
we begin work when the sun stops screaming,  
then our cigarette ends become the only stars in the sky,  
each morning we like to say the word "Abyssinia."

we have no veneration for the temples  
you so smugly consider solid  
we carry our flamingo heads into new humidities.  
we have invented new instruments  
— the fly piano, the chicken pillow,

we are arranging the collapse of neon, banking, dictionaries  
and a ballet for "No Standing Anytime" signs.

we believe in only one science, the science of Anything.  
suicide has become stale beer to us. unpalatable.  
we cast our vote with  
the fortitude of the vagabond  
and the licorice nakedness of Africa.  
we only believe in democracy in the buying of drinks.  
there is only one vice from which we refrain —  
the vice of Nationality.

we write our poems upside down, hanging from the trapeze  
of insomnia.  
we have thrown the sleeping pill of Hollywood down  
the storm drain.

we have no children —  
the existence of volcanoes  
and parrots carrying rainbows under their wings  
are children enough for us

we do not accept your prisons,  
we do not accept the madhouse —  
their latitude and longitude of misery ...  
we will sail away from them through our art.  
we do not admire preachers  
we admire the elastic man, the eskimo, the aborigine,  
the hermit ...



men who have no need for watches  
men who have no need for shoes  
those that dream of a new Madagascar  
men who have learnt their lessons  
under the truculent academy of the sun ....

## THE PERFUME OF QUESTION MARKS

— for Simon Killen

What's important?  
I'd say  
water and truth,  
that our pilots are sober.  
Comfortable shoes  
rather than a map,  
and hope  
a small sparrow of hope  
rather than  
arrival.

## WALKING THE STREETS OF PARIS (DECEMBER 1985)

The sky is janitor rag grey  
the sky stutters tiny mouths of rain  
the shop windows are pregnant with Xmas.  
The lorry drivers look like lorry drivers —  
stubbled, cigarette nailed into mouth.  
Their faces — a fist of frustration,  
checkmated again as they always will be  
by Paris's narrow streets.

In front of the Dulac Detective Agency  
a man in plain street clothes passes  
with a large unwrapped slab of meat tucked  
up under his suit arm.  
Simultaneously on the opposite side of the street,  
arms swinging loosely, a woman carries her baby magnetized  
against her chest via a half-zipped-up, tight leather  
jacket ...  
there seems to be a new wisdom on the steets.

At the Central Post Office I find it impossible  
to buy a postal cheque for 250 francs payable  
to the Consulate of the Central African Republic.  
I walk past the Pig Foot restaurant  
but it is too expensive for me.  
It features above the awning  
a neon pig holding a wine bottle and a glass of neon wine.  
I enter a street I haven't walked down for 7 years